

From: Monte Smith [mailto:full_monte@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 07, 2006 7:45 AM
To: MLPACComments@resources.ca.gov
Subject: MLPACComments: Comments on the various MLPA proposals

Dear Members of the Blue Ribbon Task Force,

I seldom write letters to government agencies or representatives, but feel that it's important to write about this one.

As a 58-year-old California native, I have enjoyed many marine activities including scuba diving, spearfishing, fishing, boating, abalone diving, and underwater photography. Having personally observed the underwater environment for over forty years, I can tell you that the number and diversity of marine animals has decreased to disturbingly low levels in the close-to-shore areas that are available to divers.

You are considering quite a number of proposals. I read them and looked at your website, which says your mission is

"To protect, maintain, enhance, and restore California's marine ecosystems for their ecological values and their use and enjoyment by the public."

So the question is, which of these many proposals most closely aligns with your mission? I think that anyone serious about this mission would be very interested in protecting the Monterey marine environment from further "take" exploitation as a step towards restoring this important ecosystem to what it once was.

We regularly see news reports about construction projects on land being stopped to protect a species of frog or a plant. We saw logging stopped to protect a species of owls. Yet, we seldom see such conservation-minded activities in the underwater environment, simply because that environment is invisible to anyone who doesn't visit it. This "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" culture allows more taking of marine animals than would ever be allowed if these animals lived on land, where the effects can be more easily observed.

If you have not observed the long-term degradation of the Monterey marine environment directly yourself, I urge you to take the word of someone who has, and err on the side of conserving it in your decision. I support proposal #2 over the others for this reason.

The "takers" of marine life have a very long coastline to exploit. Why not save this small section of it for posterity?

Sincerely,

Monte Smith
Campbell, California